

BUSTING BAD BRONCS AT OLD CHEYENNE

By John A. Chapman

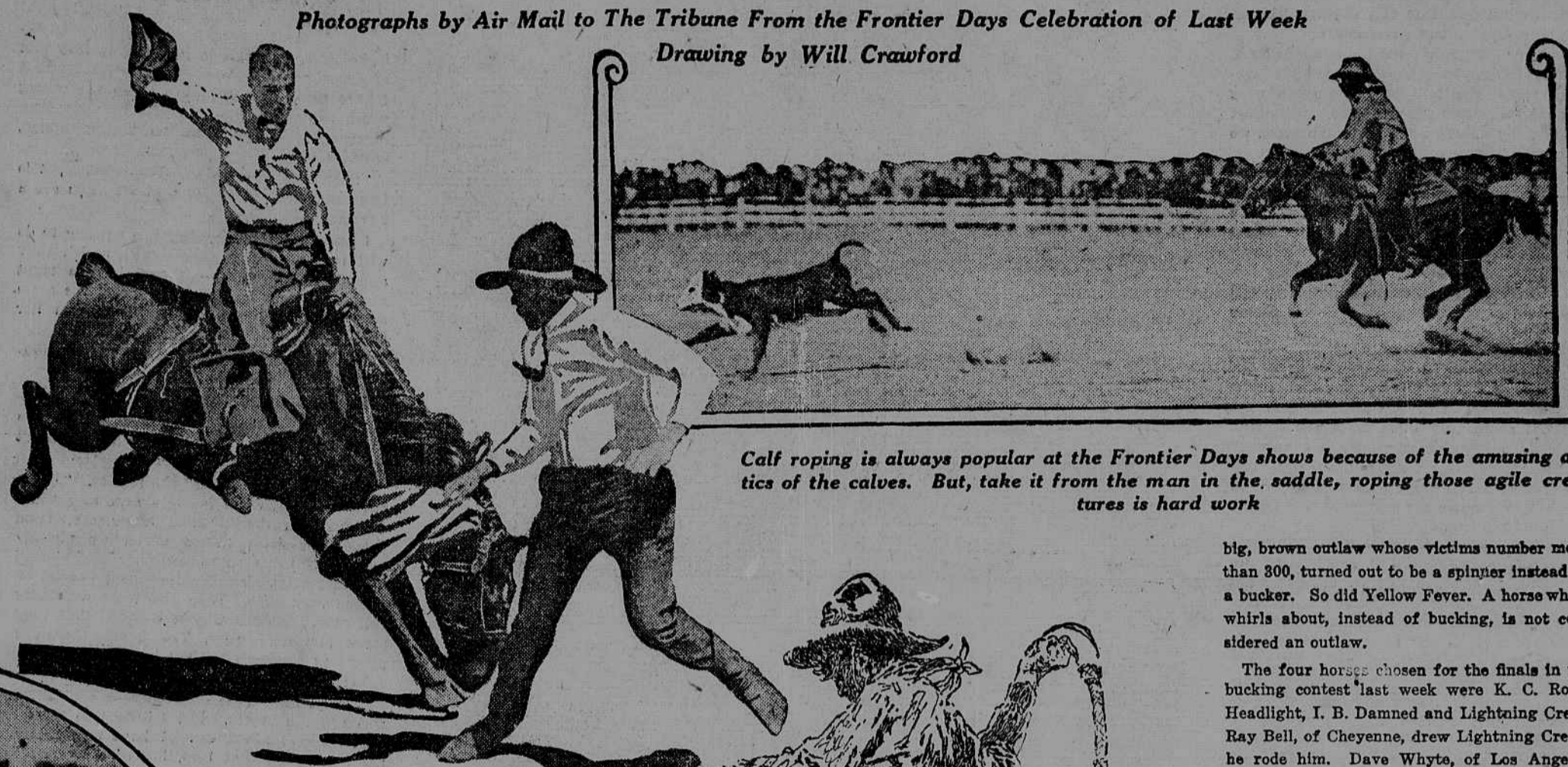
THE oldtime West is gone! People are sick of Wild West stuff! How many times have you heard the foregoing two sentences? How many times, particularly in the columns commanded by metropolitan "movie" critics, have you read statements different only in the amount of verbal embellishment?

The twenty-fifth annual Frontier Days celebration, held last week in Cheyenne, Wyo., proved to some seventy thousand individuals from East and West that the first statement is sadly incorrect. The old West still lives. It was a typically American crowd, gathered to pay tribute to the cowboy—a product of the most romantic era of American life.

And those same thousands of people, the greatest crowd ever gathered in Cheyenne to witness the wildest of all frontier exhibitions, furnish prima facie evidence as to the fallacy of the second sentence.

Records in all the oldtime cowboy arts—bulldogging, calf roping, steer riding, relay

Photographs by Air Mail to The Tribune From the Frontier Days Celebration of Last Week
Drawing by Will Crawford



Calf roping is always popular at the Frontier Days shows because of the amusing antics of the calves. But, take it from the man in the saddle, roping those agile creatures is hard work

Action! Often a bronco is dazed when the blind is torn from his eyes. But not so with this one. Paul Hanson on Lightning Creek



When the calf is finally roped and "hog tied," the cowboy raises his arms to show that his work is done. Meantime the calf has been providing no end of exercise



Phil Yoder, world's champion bronco buster. Yoder won \$700 in cash and a \$500 saddle, but most men wouldn't bestride the outlaw horse, K. C. Roan, for many times those rewards



Ed McCarty, one of the broad-sombreroed "regulars," who can always be depended upon to put up a good ride, has drawn a twister in this bronco, which is showing some new steps

events in which he was billed to appear. One of those who saw Campbell carried off the field was Ted McCarty, a rider who had been thrown and sent to the hospital on the previous day. McCarty left the hospital and went back to the bucking field to deny the rumors that he was dead.

In a steer roping contest Claude Sawyer's right leg was broken. Sawyer had thrown his steer, when his mount, overbalanced by the weight of the steer, turned a somersault and rolled on his rider.

Jack Brown, a cowboy, who had volunteered to ride a bucking steer, was injured immediately after he had dropped astride the animal in the saddling chute. The steer dashed through the gate, which opened only part way. Brown's leg was broken and he sustained internal injuries.

In the same contest Fred Besson was thrown and so severely injured that he was taken to the hospital, though he was back and taking part in events the next day.

In general it is the terrific pounding they receive which works the greatest injury to the riders. The shock, as a bucking horse alights stiff-legged, with not a particle of spring in its body, is something that few human beings can stand many times in succession. Cowboys who ride mounts that are particularly hard buckers frequently bleed at the mouth. More than one of the old-time "top hands" whose specialty was breaking broncos went into quick consumption as a result of the strain on the lungs.

Generally the cowboys will emerge apparently unscathed from mixups in which it is impossible to descry man or horse. The men have an uncanny knowledge of horse nature, and they have been at close quarters with frenzied animals on so many occasions that they have acquired the prizefighter's dexterity in avoiding punishment. Only, when the horse does land a blow it is a knockout that means the hospital, and not a few minutes of half consciousness with the loser's end of a prizefight purse acting as instant salve.

The women also have their place on the program—and a very large place. A few years ago women riders at these shows were unknown, but now there are several who share honors with the most daring of the men riders.

Premiere among them is Lorena Trickey, twenty-one, slender and possessed of more than masculine courage and skill. For the second time Miss Trickey earned the title of world champion woman rider—a title which carries with it the McAlpin trophy, presented by the Hotel McAlpin, and a trip to New York in the late fall.

Miss Trickey contended against a field which included Kitty Canutt, her companion; Mrs. Hank Keenen, Jessie Roberts, Mary Stockum and Pauline Irwin. Two famous cowgirls, Prairie Rose Henderson and Ruth Roach, were elsewhere.

During the four days of the celebration Miss Trickey rode broncos, did trick and fancy riding, rode relay strings and, most dangerous of all, "rode Roman." In all but the bucking and relay riding the field against her was for the most part men. Often she led the field. Always was she near the top. Particularly in the Roman standing races did this little Oregon ranch girl prove her right to her title.

Scarcely less interesting to the tourist than the four-day competition at Frontier Park, a mile from Cheyenne, is the old cow town itself. Except for the last week of July Cheyenne resembles any other town and does not suggest the stirring story of its early days. But in that one week it becomes a boom town. It's just as if somebody had made a rich gold strike. In fact, somebody has. An influx of tourists which forces the little city to turn its residences into hotels and the arrival of hundreds of cowboys, who, after a year of planning, come to town to get their broad-brimmed hats, their silk kerchiefs and their green shirts, literally makes Cheyenne a gold camp.

Frontier Days is not a private venture. It is the result of effort on the part of all Cheyenne. A committee of five citizens runs the show, and profits—last year they amounted to \$11,000—go to some public benefit. The proceeds of 1920 were devoted to construction of an aviation field for the air mail service and to a hospital.

Three weeks or more before the celebration rooms in the principal hotels are contracted for. Then the Chamber of Commerce establishes a clearing house which makes one hotel of the whole town. When a traveler asks for a room he is taken in a taxi to some private residence. Those who have tents go out near Frontier Park to the city automobile camp, which is guarded by soldiers.

Cheyenne's auto camp during normal times is small. During Frontier Week it is second only to that in Denver. Seven thousand cars utilized the camp during the last celebration. The day after the close a handful of tents remained scattered over the broad prairie camp grounds. At Frontier Park, twenty-four hours before a bedlam of spectators, cowboys, horseflesh and steers, the only living things one may observe, according to a well-posted Cheyenne citizen, are the gophers, who are sitting around "wondering what in Hades happened to the landscape."

And the shopkeepers in town, with their wares depleted, remind one very much of those gophers as they stand behind counters in relatively empty stores.

tracing—were approached, and a sterling brand of bucking horse riding was exhibited.

Interest of spectators at Cheyenne's annual show has always been centered about the bronco busting. This epic struggle, between the sheer physical ability of men and the cunning and agility of outlaw horses formed the chief event, from the spectator's point of view, even before the time when famed Old Steamboat first threw Otto Ploeger at the third Frontier Days celebration.

The men—and the women—have maintained the old traditions. Phil Yoder, of Meriden, Wyo., crowned present bucking horse champion last week after he had battled the vicious K. C. Roan to the thorough satisfaction of judges and crowd, is as good a rider, oldtimers aver, as any who have gone before.

Of course, there never will be another Steamboat, a horse that was only once ridden; but the far ranges of to-day are still producing buckers which would have tossed Ploeger and Stanley as easily as they toss modern riders. Dean of the present clan of outlaws, perhaps, is I. B. Damned. Year after year for the last several seasons this horse regularly makes a practice of forcing even the best of men to attempt choking the saddle horn to death, and the percentage of riders he has "piled up" is high.

Then the peers of I. B. Damned are K. C. Roan, Lightning Creek and Headlight. The "find" of the last Cheyenne celebration is Pretty Dick. Practically unheard of, this powerful outlaw in consecutive days tossed the best men clear of the saddle. But he may be no good next year.

But, veterans ask, will these outlaws even approach the record set by Steamboat?

To those who know, the name of Steamboat is pronounced with reverence. They recognize that he, if ever a horse did, had a character which demanded respect in life and reverence in a martyr's death. About twenty-two years ago ranch hands near Laramie, Wyo., recognized genius in Steamboat. They knew he would make a good outlaw. He was brought to Cheyenne, and the aforementioned Otto

Ploeger, a good rider from Sybille, Wyo., was the first contestant to draw him as a mount.

Steamboat's tactics then were the same as they were in later years. He bunched his feet stood for a second, actually visibly calling to attention every one of his powerful muscles. Then he launched into a series of stiff-legged jumps.

Fifteen minutes later, anxiously watched over beneath the grandstand at Frontier Park, Ploeger woke up and gathered breath enough to talk.

And so the great Steamboat carved his career. His manner was most unusual. Without a man astride him, he was as gentle as any ordinary range horse. Children could approach him and he was regularly led in parades without the least commotion. While it takes a mounting chute and several men to saddle some bronchos, Steamboat could easily be saddled by two men out in the arena. It was only when chaps-incensed legs bestrode him that he became possessed of a demoniac desire to be rid of all mankind. As soon as his rider was sprawled on the ground he would stop bucking.

In the fifteenth show at Cheyenne, where he first publicly threw a rider, he met his only downfall. Dick Stanley, who arrived in town from Oregon with his chaps wrapped in paper and a small sackful of clothing, drew Steamboat. Stanley officially conquered, but those who saw his ride aver that, great as it was, it amounted only to a questionable decision over the valiant black horse.

It was raining and the track at Frontier Park was mud. Steamboat, his lightning feet mired down, finally stood, trembling, and Stanley leaped off. Those who knew Steamboat say the horse had not finished and that he would have bucked harder than ever when he had his "second wind."

Steamboat's end was untimely. In 1911 he broke a leg in a stock car, en route from Crawford, Neb., to Fort Morgan, Colo. A few days later he was killed, for gangrene developed in the injured leg, and veterinarians despaired of saving him. Some day, according to plans

of the Cheyenne Commercial Association, there will be a monument to Steamboat at the entrance of Frontier Park.

Of recent years there have been many horses, like Yellow Fever and Coyote, which have given promise of equaling the indomitable Steamboat; but they have failed. Coyote, a